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D: SECRETARY KISSINGER
ROM: GRAHAM MARTIN
EF#: WH50718

1. MUCH APPRECIATE SENTIMENT EXPRESSED LAST SENTENCE YOUR MESSAGE.

2. FOR YOUR INFORMATION, AND I DON'T THINK YOU REALLY NEED IT, I HAD CONCLUDED SOME TIME AGO THAT THE SITUATION HERE WOULD PROBABLY NOT WORK OUT. WHEN I CAME BACK WITH THE CONGRESSIONAL GROUP, AND SAW THE TOTAL LACK OF ORGANIZED FOLLOW-THROUGH BY DEPARTMENT AND EXECUTIVE BRANCH, ALTHOUGH SOME INDIVIDUALS DID DEDICATED AND EFFECTIVE JOB, MY EVERY INSTINCT WAS THAT TIME WAS SHORT. EVERYTHING ELSE I HAVE DONE SINCE HAS BEEN TO PLAY FOR TIME UNTIL WE CAN GET THE AMERICANS OUT, AND ARRANGE OUR LEAVING SO THAT THE MANNER OF IT WOULD NOT ADD A FURTHER DISGRACE TO THE SAD HISTORY OF OUR INVOLVEMENT.

3. IT MAY WELL BE THAT HANOI WILL MAKE A SMASH AT SAIGON IN ORDER TO BE HERE ON HO CHI MINH'S BIRTHDAY ON 19 MAY. I STILL THINK THEIRV CURRENT DRIVE HAS AS ITS PRIMARY AIM THE ELIMINATION OF THIEU, INSTALLATION OF A WEAK SUCCESSOR REGIME, NEGOTIATION OF A WEAK NEUTRALIST GOVERNMENT WHICH THEY CAN TAKE OVER AT THEIR LEISURE, OR WHICH WILL INVITE THEM IN TO THE ACCLAIM OF SOME, BUT TO THE TOTAL DISMAY OF THOSE HERE WHO WOULD HAVE NO FUTURE BUT DEATH OR EXILE IF THEY COULD MAKE IT. IT IS THE LATTER GROUP, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN THE MILITARY WHO FEEL PARTICULARLY BITTER, WHICH CAUSES ME THE MOST FEAR AS WE FINISH GETTING MOST OF THE AMERICANS OUT.

4. SOME OF THE RECENT MESSAGES FROM WASHINGTON HAVE BEEN SLIGHTLY INCONSISTENT. I AM NOW PROCEEDING ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT YOU WILL WISH TO KEEP THE MISSION OPEN AS LONG AS THERE IS A CHANCE THAT THERE CAN BE A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. I WOULD HOPE TO GET THE AMERICAN

********** WHSR COMMENT **********

HAK, SCOWCROFT, RODMAN, MCFARLANE

RECALLED
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OFFICIAL PRESENCE DOWN TO ABOUT 750 WITHIN THREE WEEKS: 75 IN STATE ELEMENT, 75 IN AID ELEMENT, 5 IN USIS, [redacted], 250 DAO CIVILIANS, AND ABOUT 20 MISC. 100 CONTRACTORS(AID & DAO) 75 MARINES AND [redacted] PART OF THOSE CONTRACTORS ARE AIR AMERICA PILOTS, WHO I WANT AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. PART OF THE HILL AND PUBLIC PRESSURE IS TO PANIC US INTO YANKING ALL AMERICANS WITH THE SURE KNOWLEDGE THAT SUCH ACTION WOULD BE THE LAST PSYCHOLOGICAL BLOW TO SEND THIS COUNTRY DOWN THE CHUTE. WHEN WE GET TO THE 705 POINT, WHICH INCLUDES THE AIR AMERICA GROUP, WE WILL BE ABLE TO ARRANGE A SWIFT PULL WITHOUT MUCH DIFFICULTY. I AM PULLING BIEN HOA TOMORROW AND I HOPE THERE WILL BE NO PUBLICITY ABOUT IT FOR A WHILE. I DO NOT INTEND TO RISK ANOTHER DANANG, AND WE WILL BE PREPARED TO MOVE WITH EXTREME RAPIDITY, AND WILL SO MOVE WELL BEFORE THE ACTUAL NECESSITY.

5. WE WILL BADGER, CAJOLE, THREATEN AND EVEN BLACKMAIL IF WE CAN THE ELEMENT OF THE PRIVATE COMMUNITY WHICH WILL CAUSE THE MOST TROUBLE, THE LOTUS EATERS WITH VIETNAMESE DEPENDANTS. WE ARE GETTING A LOT OUT BUT THERE ARE SOME WHO, HAVING LIVED THROUGH TET AND THE OTHER MAJOR VIETNAM OFFENSIVES ARE INCLINED TO REGARD THIS AS YET ANOTHER TO BE TAKEN IN STRIDE. THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY WILL BE NO PROBLEM. THEY ARE PREPARED AND READY TO GO AT A MOMENTS NOTICE, AS ARE MOST OF THE OTHER RESPONSIBLE AMERICAN PRIVATE CITIZENS HERE.

6. I AM NOT SURPRISED THAT "IN THE UNANIMOUS VIEW OF THE AGENCIES REPRESENTED, THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM IS RAPIDLY AND IRRETREVIABLY APPROACHING THE WORST CASE". ALL OF THEM WERE SAYING NOT LONG AGO THAT THERE WOULD BE NO "GENERAL OFFENSIVE" THIS YEAR. 40 YEARS AGO WHEN I GOT STARTED IN THE INTELLIGENCE BUSINESS A VERY WISE OLD MAN TOLD ME THAT IF ONE PREDICTS A DISASTER THAT DOES NOT HAPPEN, ONE GETS A SLAP ON THE WRIST. IF ONE FAILS TO PREDICT A DISASTER THAT DOES HAPPEN, ONE IS DISGRACED OR FIRED. HE ALSO SAID THAT IN THE LATTER CASE, WHERE THEY HAD BEEN WRONG, THE ESTIMATES FOR A WHILE WOULD BE HEAVILY WEIGHTED ON THE EXTREMELY PESSIMISTIC SIDE. THERE IS A BIT OF THAT HERE. WHAT IS MISSING IN MOST OF THE ESTIMATES OR SENIOR APPRAISALS IS "THE TIME FRAME". I KEEP PINNING THEM DOWN HERE, AND THE MOST PESSIMISTIC ESTIMATE IS THAT WE HAVE TEN DAYS BEFORE ACTUAL DANGER TO AMERICANS. THE AVERAGE IS A MONTH TO SIX WEEKS, UNLESS RPT UNLESS MEANINGFUL NEGOTIATIONS START. SO I AM PREPARED FOR THE WORST CASE, BUT WONDER IF WE WANT TO PRECIPITATE IT BY ACTIONS OF OUR OWN UNTIL IT IS REALLY NECESSARY. HISTORY WILL JUDGE WHETHER WE DID SO, OR COOLY PLAYED THE HAND OUT, READY TO MOVE AT THE FIRST REAL INDICATION THAT WE SHOULD. I DON'T THINK WE CAN REALLY TELL WHAT DECISION SHOULD BE MADE UNTIL I CAN SEE THIEU WHICH I HOPE TO DO TOMORROW OR SUNDAY. IN THE MEANTIME, WE SHALL ACCELERATE THE STRIPPING PROCESS WITH ALL POSSIBLE SPEED.

7. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION ABOUT THE WISDOM AND FEASIBILITY OF OUR WORKING OUT SOME ARRANGEMENT WHICH WOULD PERMIT

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A VUNGTAU EVACUATION OF THE VIETNAMESE TO WHOM WE ARE MOST DEEPLY INDEBTED. AFTER I SEE THIEU AND AFTER I TALK WITH ADMIRAL GAYLER AND GENERAL SMITH TOMORROW. YOU FULLY RECOGNIZE THAT TO MAKE THIS APPROACH WE ARE GIVING A CLEAR SIGNAL THAT EVEN ANY HOPE OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT HAS GONE. PERHAPS THAT IS SO, BUT SINCE I DOUBT THAT THIS INITIATIVE COULD BE UNDERTAKEN WITHOUT LEAKS IN WASHINGTON, I AM RELUCTANT TO DENY THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE THAT LAST CHANCE. IF I FIND THIEU OBDURATE AND IN A "GOTTERDAMERUNG" MOOD, I WILL SO RECOMMEND.

8. THIEU AT MY URGING DID SEE THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR WHOM I HAVE NOT SEEN SINCE, BOTH OF US THINKING IT UNWISE TO EXACERABATE THE DEEP SUSPICIONS OF FRANCO-AMERICAN COLLUSION THAT IS DEEPSEATED HERE. IF YOU HAVE HAD ANY REPORTS FROM PARIS, THEY WOULD BE MOST WELCOME BEFORE I SEE THIEU.

9. IF WE COULD SETTLE FOR THE OLD $300 MILLION, IT WOULD BUY US A LITTLE MORE TIME HERE. IF THERE IS A CHANCE OF IT, I HOPE YOU DELAY UNTIL THE PARLIAMENTARY MANEUVERS ARE EXHAUSTED OR UNTIL YOU GET IT. AND HAVE WE HEARD WHETHER JIM AKINS PERFORMED A SMALL OR LARGE MIRACLE.

10. WARM REGARDS.
S E C R E T EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY VIA MARTIN CHANNELS.
BT

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